

LONG BEACH

# CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

2012-2013 IN REVIEW





The City of Long Beach has a strong commitment to historic preservation. This commitment is demonstrated through the programs and policies of the City, and is further strengthened through the establishment of a Cultural Heritage Commission. Appointed by the Mayor, the seven-member Commission plays an important role in recognizing, preserving and protecting the City's cultural resources and historical identity. The Commission identifies buildings and neighborhoods of value to the City's cultural heritage, makes recommendations to City Council for the designation of landmarks and historic districts, and encourages the public's understanding and appreciation of Long Beach's rich architectural and environmental history. The Commission acts as an advisor on planning policies as they relate to historical preservation, reviewing all proposed modifications to designated landmarks or any improvement within a historic district. The Commission also works with property owners of historic sites, advising on technical aspects of preservation, renovation, rehabilitation, and reuse, and issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness thereon. Upholding the City's heritage is essential to the aesthetic character and diversity of Long Beach; and further reinforces civic pride and economic vitality by enhancing property value and promoting tourist trade. The City continues to build momentum for historical preservation initiatives with more flexible adaptive reuse guidelines, and recent review of the Mills Act property tax reduction program. As of December 2013, there are currently 130 designated individual local landmarks and 17 designated historic districts in the City (see map on back page).

## Cultural Heritage Commission 2012 By the Numbers\*

- Conducted **11** scheduled meetings.
- Approved **16** Certificates of Appropriateness, consisting of **12** residential properties and **4** commercial properties.
- Conducted **5** study sessions on different properties.
- Took action on **4** existing designated landmarks.

## 2013 By the Numbers\*

- Conducted **11** scheduled meetings.
- Approved **21** Certificates of Appropriateness, consisting of **11** residential properties and **10** commercial properties.
- Conducted **5** study sessions on different properties.
- Took action on **6** existing designated landmarks.

\*Figures provided are for the calendar year.





## Cultural Heritage Commission 2012

**Irma Hernandez**, Chair

**Karen L. Highberger**, Vice Chair

**Shannon Carmack**

**Louise Ivers**

**Harvey Keller**

**Laura Brasser** (term ended June 2012)

**Alan Burks** (term began July 2012)

## Cultural Heritage Commission 2013

**Alan Burks**, Chair (term began November 2013)

**Karen L. Highberger**, Vice Chair

**Irma Hernandez**

**Shannon Carmack**

**Louise Ivers**

**Harvey Keller** (term ended August 2013)

**Jan Robert van Dijs** (appointed October 2013)

## Department of Development Services Staff

**Amy J. Bodek**, AICP, Director

**Rob Zur Schmiede**, AICP, Deputy Director (term ended October 2013)

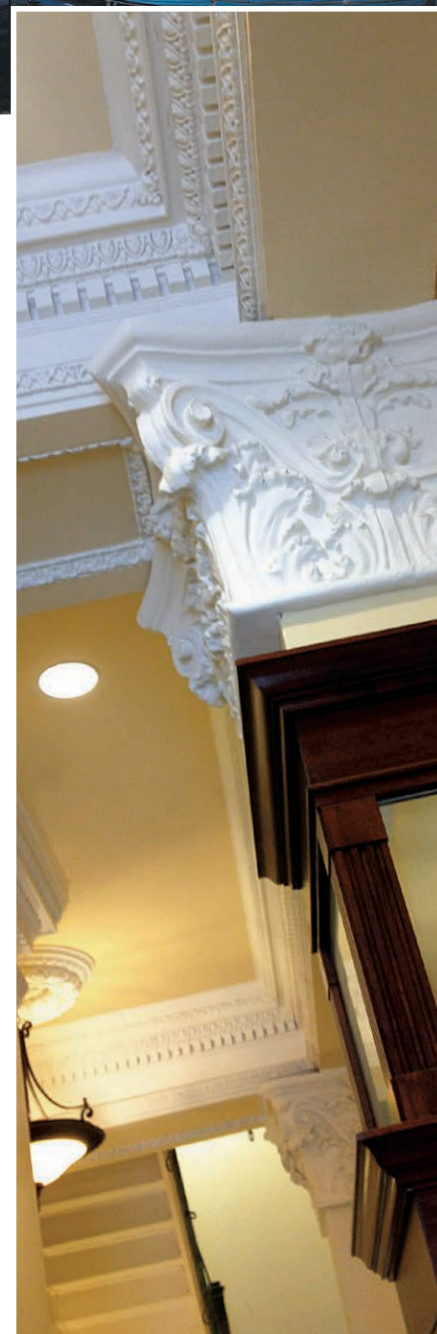
**Derek Burnham**, Planning Administrator (term ended October 2013)

**Jeff Winklepleck**, Acting Planning Administrator (term began November 2013)

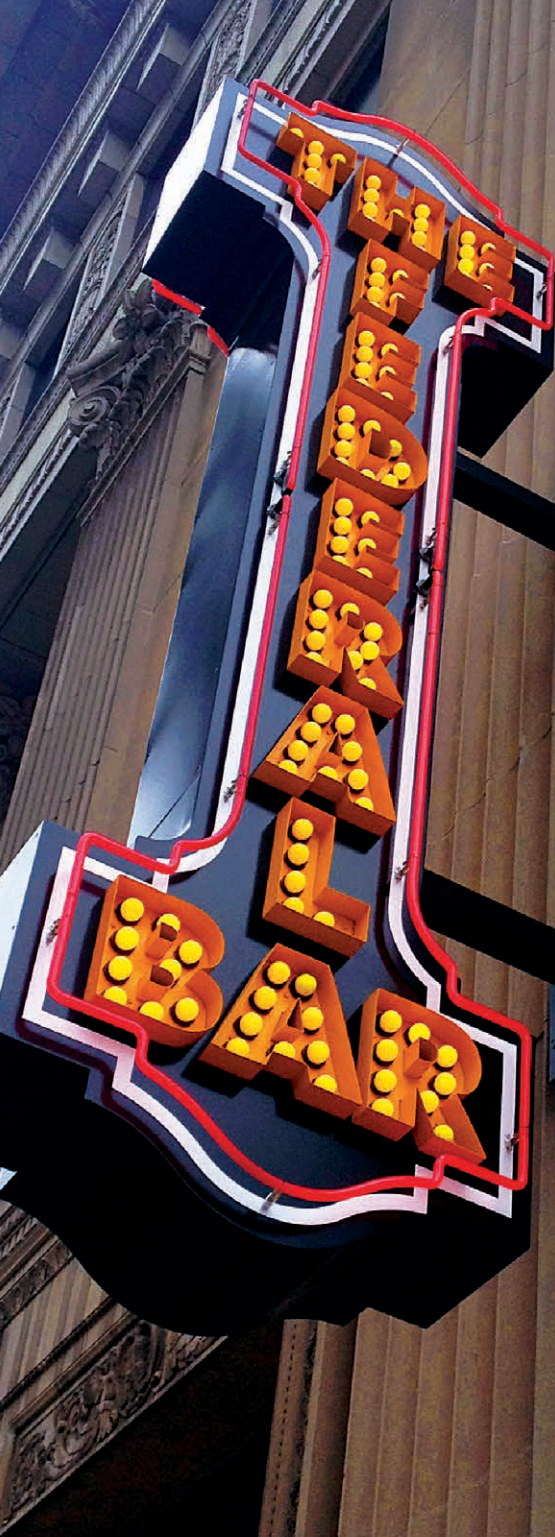
**Jill Griffiths**, AICP, Planning Officer (term ended November 2013)

**Steve Gerhardt**, Acting Planning Officer (term began January 2014)

**Thelinjoris Manuel**, Cultural Heritage Commission Secretary







## Historic Preservation Initiatives

### Mills Act

The Mills Act is a State program that offers economic incentives to qualifying owners of historic or designated landmark sites upon agreement to rehabilitate, restore and protect their buildings. Under the Mills Act contracts, private owners receive tax relief in exchange for the proper maintenance and preservation of the property for a revolving 10-year term. Since going dormant in 2006, review of the City's program is currently underway to allow for new Mills Act contracts for eligible property owners. The Mills Act program is especially beneficial for recent buyers of historic sites and current owners of historic buildings who have made major improvements to their properties. Existing Mills Act contracts in the City have undergone recent inspection of the overall condition of the structures, in accordance with specific historic preservation standards and conditions identified per the contract. The Mills Act is expected to be restarted in 2014.

### Adaptive Reuse

Adopted in fall 2013 as part of the new building code, and with subsequent revisions to the Long Beach Municipal Code, new and more flexible guidelines have been implemented for the conversion of existing buildings for new purposes, to include adaptive reuse provisions for designated landmarks. These new standards will also benefit many potential historic properties throughout the City. In addition to adaptive reuse provisions, the State Historic Building Code (SHBC) serves as a valuable tool for the preservation of historic resources, including matters pertaining to the maintenance and conversion of existing buildings for new uses.

### Historic District and Landmark Review

The City is in the beginning stages of preparing design standards and management guidelines for the 17 designated historic districts. Similarly, the process for designating individual structures as local historic landmarks is currently under evaluation. The end result will be a refined program that provides more design and exterior material guidance for restoration projects; and allows for the designation of more City landmarks, preserving the rich historic fabric that makes Long Beach's older neighborhoods unique.

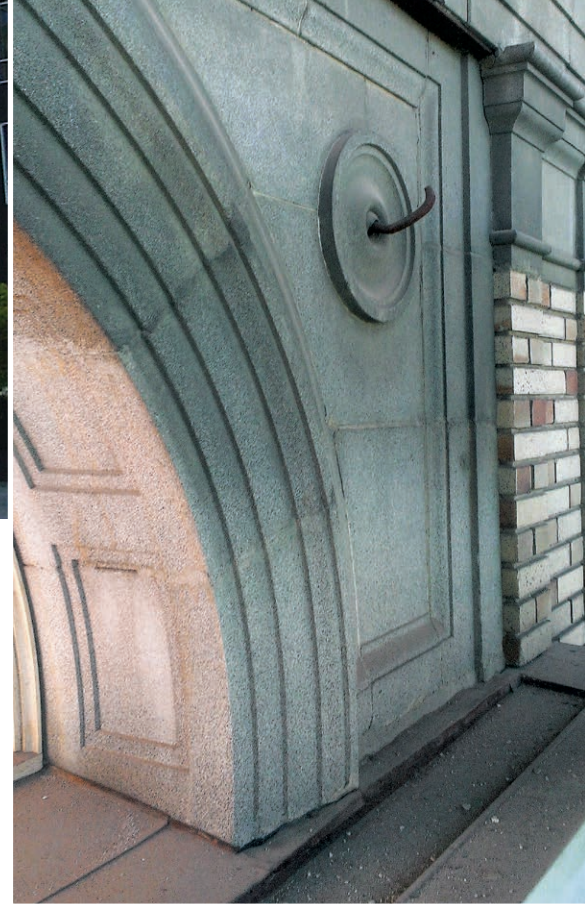






## Press-Telegram Building / Meeker-Baker Building

Restoration of the historic Press-Telegram Building was completed in June 2013, in the first of a three-phase project to include the Meeker-Baker Building. The 89,000-square-foot Press-Telegram Building development includes a rehabilitated façade, interior enhancements, and a creatively landscaped outdoor plaza and pedestrian space that will connect the two buildings housed along Pine Avenue. The building incorporates a variety of outdoor terraces, and has been renewed to reflect the site's urban location. The adaptive reuse project supports the City's long-term redevelopment goals by giving new life to high-quality, but long-vacant buildings. Currently under construction, the adjacent six-story, 127,000-square-foot Meeker-Baker project gained entitlements in six months through reliance on the Downtown Plan Program EIR (PEIR). Originally built in 1924, the Meeker-Baker Building is known for its decorative brick and tile work, topped with arched openings and medallions. Like the Press-Telegram Building, design for the Meeker-Baker includes the preservation of some of the original features of the historic façade and interior décor elements. The Cultural Heritage Commission worked closely with planning staff to ensure an efficient and thorough review of the project, while also preserving a historic building. To be occupied by Molina Healthcare, completion of this project in July 2014 will result in 800 to 1,000 new jobs in the City.







## Long Beach Airport Terminal Improvement

The Airport Terminal Improvement project completed construction and officially opened in December 2012, after years of anticipation for a new modern facility with state-of-the-art features. The resulting development proved to be much more than a modernization effort when construction began and the decision was made to remove the long-standing carpet that had covered the floors of the historic 1941 terminal for decades. Underneath the layers of carpeting, vintage ceramic tile mosaic murals were revealed intact throughout the Art Deco airport's first and second floors. The Works Progress Administration artist Grace Clements-designed murals were discovered along the stretch of the main concourse with only minor cracks in the tiles. After months of restoration, with each piece being individually polished, the long-hidden mosaics dedicated to Long Beach's culture of oil wells, aviation, and shipping, were reclaimed to their original condition in time for the opening of the new terminal. Along with the award-winning comfortable and inviting new concourse, a variety of amenities and outdoor seating areas, the three million travelers passing through the designated landmark site each year are now able to enjoy a piece of the City's rich and storied history uniquely preserved right below their feet.





## Psychic Temple (Formerly American Hotel)

Built in 1905, the Psychic Temple is the second-oldest commercial building in the City, and one of the rare original buildings to survive the destructive Long Beach Earthquake of 1933. In 2012, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued and awarded to Urbana Development for preservation, rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of the former single room occupancy American Hotel. After remaining unused for more than a decade, renovation efforts for the designated landmark building began in earnest in 2013 with the partnering of interTrend Communications and the City of Long Beach to bring the site back to life. The proposed mixed-use project will include

restoration of the historic façade; and contain approximately 3,670 square feet of retail space on the ground floor, and 7,000 square feet of creative office space on the second and third floors. Although retrofitted with a nominal seismic upgrade, subsequent assessments concluded that considerable renovation of the structural, mechanical and electrical systems were required in order for the building to be made functional and habitable. Completion of the revitalized Psychic Temple is expected at the end of summer 2014, further eliminating a physical and economic blight in the Downtown by restoring occupancy and economic energy to the block.







## Masonic Temple

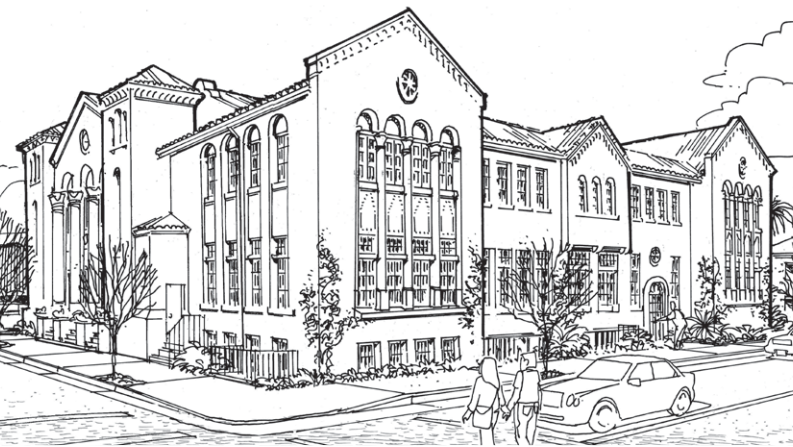
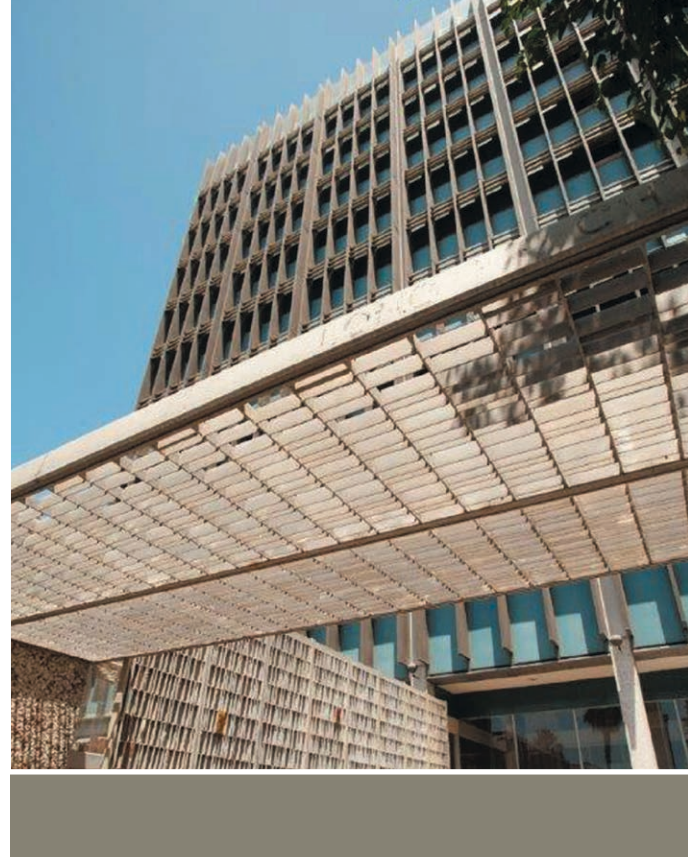
A Certificate of Appropriateness was issued by the Cultural Heritage Commission in 2013 for interior and exterior modifications to the designated landmark building located at 230 Pine Avenue. Built in 1903, the Masonic Temple has operated as a multi-use site consisting of a public venue and combination of retail and office space. The project includes rehabilitation of the storefront façade, enhanced entryways with new doors and window treatments; a new front stairway that has been restored to its original historic configuration, and other interior improvements.





## The Edison (Formerly City Hall East)

Distinguished by its curtain wall of vertical fins and horizontal louvers, the classic mid-century 10-story tower commonly known as City Hall East was entitled for adaptive reuse in late 2013. Built for Southern California Edison in 1959 by noted local architect Kenneth Wing, the building was later used as municipal office space for City Hall and the Long Beach Police Department before becoming vacant in 2005. The proposed development project will consist of a 12-story, 156-unit market rate residential component with a pool and amenity deck, approximately 3,621 square feet of retail space, and an expanded parking structure. The existing patio will be renewed with landscaping and restoration of the mid-century metal work to provide an additional 4,171-square-foot publicly accessible open space. The project as proposed would replace the building's notable curtain wall with a new unitized panel that includes a horizontal grill and operable casement window, high efficiency glass, and incorporation of the original fins. The 114,267-square-foot mixed-use development provides a reinvention of the building's original design and façade, while converting the structure for new residential and commercial uses. The project will result in a quality building that fits in well within the context of the area, and provides a strong presence in the downtown core while largely honoring the mid-century design of the original building. Completion of this project is expected in September 2015.



## Immanuel Church

Adaptive reuse of the former Immanuel Church has been proposed for an affordable senior housing project. Built in 1922, and later reconstructed due to damage from the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, the Art Deco style church housed traditional American Baptist Association worship services before becoming vacant in 2012. In an effort to restore the site's historic fabric and ensure architectural compatibility throughout the neighborhood, most of the building's exterior will be rehabilitated for the proposed 25-unit development. The 3,140-square-foot main sanctuary space, consisting of original stained glass windows, door panels, pipe organ, and balcony railing, will be preserved and repurposed as a community room with a kitchen and library for tenant use. The proposed project also includes the adjacent parcel on Obispo Avenue for construction of a 12-space parking lot to complement the development.





## Merrill Building

The Art Deco style commercial building designed by the eminent Schilling and Schilling was issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for façade improvements in 2012. Restoration of the two-story, stucco-clad, designated landmark site consists of repainting using the original color palette, rehabilitation of the decorative relief panels, and new storefront signage.

## Community Hospital of Long Beach

The Spanish Colonial style designated landmark site, distinguished by its two-piece Mission red clay tile roof, decorative wrought iron balconies and art stone façade, opened its doors to the public in 1924. While the hospital has undergone numerous expansions, the original two-story structure with basement remains intact and is arranged around a courtyard to provide views, light and ventilation to the spaces overlooking this area; and also serves as a gathering location for fundraising events and special functions. Various alterations have resulted in changes to the courtyard over the years, including the addition of a front driveway, new landscaping, added staircases, and a new tile fountain. In 2012, a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued to allow for further preservation of the hospital's courtyard. The recent project included the installation of eight wall sconces in the arcade, new benches, tile replacement and/or restoration, repainting the courtyard interior, and adding extra disposal units. This rehabilitation effort helps to maintain and preserve the site while still protecting the building's original historic features.







## Queen Mary

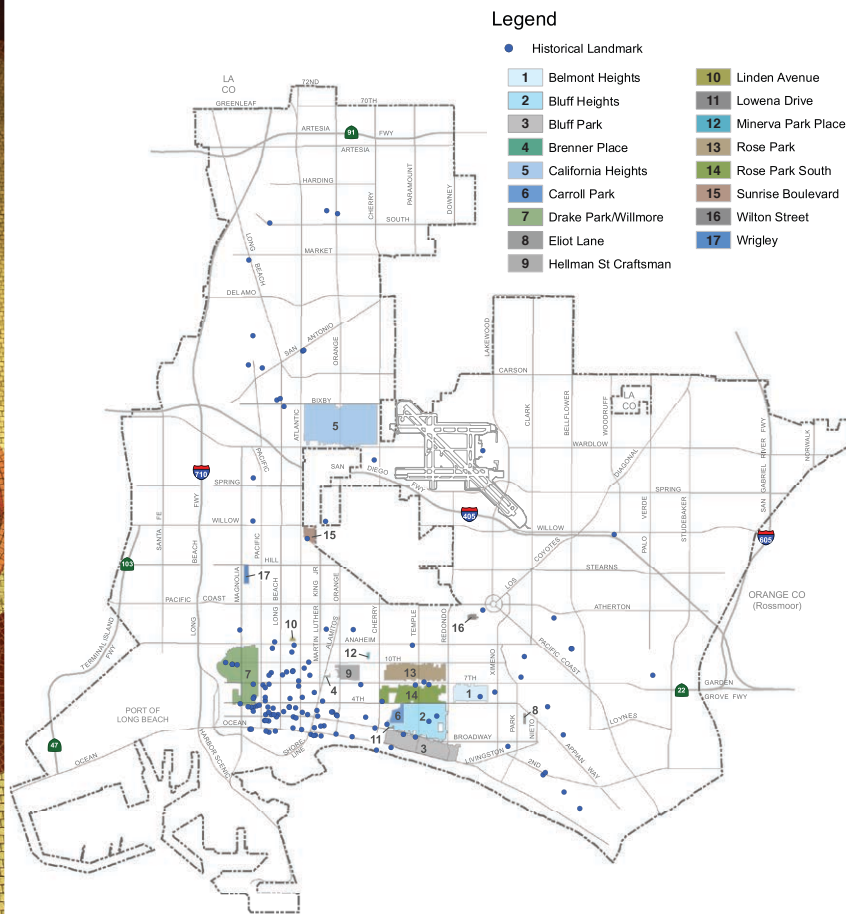
Preservation of the City's historic icon has been an ongoing effort since the Queen Mary arrived in Long Beach in 1967. In recent years, the ship has undergone various improvements to ensure its upkeep and integrity. In 2012, the First Class Music Room and First Class Children's Playroom received renovations, featuring new display exhibits and several archived items. Additional enhancements consist of wood treatments on the entire Teak Deck, refinishing of the Verandah Grill railings, retreating the Main Hall flooring, and restoration of all of the ship's original clocks. The Midship

Market Place, themed from the original Midship Bar, is amongst the latest projects completed aboard the Queen Mary. The project includes the installation of original art pieces and a vintage decorative etched glass divider, and the restoration of the original ceiling light fixtures and wood veneer. Also in 2013, Phase II of the Observation Bar Restoration program was completed. This project consisted of repainting of the original "Chinese Red" interior columns, reconstruction of the original back-bar door, and the reproduction of seven original bar stools.





# Designated City Landmarks and Historic Districts



## Photo Credits

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**Page 2** Rancho Los Cerritos, courtesy of Rancho Los Cerritos. 1st Street, The Kap Agency.

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**Page 4** The Federal Building, The Kap Agency. Cooper Arms, Emma Roll Photography. Bluff Park, The Kap Agency.

**Page 5** Press-Telegram Building / Meeker-Baker Building, K.C. Restoration; Andy Witherspoon.

**Page 6** Long Beach Airport, Emma Roll Photography.

**Page 7** American Hotel, Andy Witherspoon.

**Page 8** Masonic Temple, courtesy of Studio EMP; Andy Witherspoon.

**Page 9** The Edison, Andy Witherspoon. Immanuel Church, courtesy of Thomas Safran & Associates; The Kap Agency.

**Page 10** Merrill Building, Andy Witherspoon. Community Hospital of Long Beach, The Kap Agency.

**Page 11** Queen Mary, Emma Roll Photography.

**Back** Long Beach Airport, Emma Roll Photography. Cooper Arms, Emma Roll Photography.



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